

*Address
1952
Anthony*

Invocation

by David Rhys Williams
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At the unveiling of bronzes of Susan B. Anthony and Thomas Paine
Hall of Fame, May 18, 1952

Let us pray -

O Thou who art the Wondrous Life behind our own, we thank Thee that Thou hast raised up prophets and leaders of the people in all ages and climes, to give counsel and instruction by their understanding and foresight.

We thank Thee especially for the leadership of the illustrious ones whose valiant service in the cause of human freedom we commemorate today.

May we be mindful of the fact that there was a time when the name of neither evoked the reverent acclaim that has now become the obvious due of both.

We pray that we may achieve -
something of their sustained devotion to the common good;
something of their moral capacity to face scorn and ridicule in order to bear witness to life's deepest insights and highest ideals;
something of their persistency of purpose not to be turned aside from a great task whose urgency has been clearly discerned.

Help us to understand that if we would truly honor their memory today, it is not enough for us to praise what they once did and follow safely the trails which they once blazed, but that we too must demonstrate the same adventurous spirit and become the blazers of new trails for our own day and generation.

May we realize that we celebrate in vain unless we are moved to inquire on what hazardous front would they be likely crusading were they living at this fateful hour in human history.

O Thou who didst inspire thy servant, Thomas Paine, to include the rights of woman in his "Rights of Man", and who didst raise up thy handmaiden, Susan B. Anthony, to emancipate man through her emancipation of woman, show us the next great good that now is not, but ought to be, and grant us the will to lead the way; so that we too may leave behind us some trail of courage, some blaze of freedom, some mark of nobleness; that others coming after us may have reason to take hope and perchance to bless us for having gone before.

Amen.